

Evaluation of the Cultural Elements in the Textbook “Genki I: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese”

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Received: July 12, 2017

Accepted: August 17, 2017

Online Published: August 23, 2017

doi:10.11114/jets.v5i9.2532

URL: <https://doi.org/10.11114/jets.v5i9.2532>

Abstract

This study aims to examine the textbook “Genki I: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese” in terms of cultural elements. The data of this qualitative research were collected by means of the document review method. Content analysis, one of the qualitative analysis techniques, was used in the evaluation of the research data. A second coding was carried out by a second researcher to ensure the reliability of the study. The categories in the study were formed in the line of the cultural product, thought and behavior classifications developed by Tomalin & Stempleski (1993). In addition, the tools for cultural instruction, as taught by Qu (2010), Frank (2013), Peterson & Coltrane (2003), have helped to create the relevant codes.

In comparison of the cultural elements in the textbook “Genki I: an Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese”, this study found that the textbook emphasizes more on the elements related to behavioral dimension of the culture, but does not give much room for the elements related to belief dimension. Also, the textbook “Genki I: an Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese” was observed to use the device of “describing and explaining the culture”, at most.

Keywords: cultural elements, foreign language education, textbook, qualitative research.

1. Introduction

Language is a communication tool that stands out with its complicated structure. This communication tool offers a variety of possibilities for the individual to understand the environment, socialize and gain self-confidence. However, in order for the individual to have the possibilities offered by the language, he/she must firstly be able to use the language effectively. The effective way to use the language passes through understanding its culture.

The language does not only contain grammar, phonology and lexicology, but also contains certain features and characteristics of the relevant culture (Çakır, 2006; Qu, 2010). So, one of the goals of language teaching has been to create cultural awareness of the language learning individuals. “Learners’ cultural awareness can be shown as their perceptions and understandings of both the target language culture and their own culture” (Nguyen, 2017, p. 149). Genç & Bada (2005) found that the training given in the culturally targeted language contributes significantly to language skills and cultural awareness of the language learning individuals, profession of the target language teaching person, and change of attitudes towards both the target language and society. Bada (2000) asserts that if language teaching and culture are separated, the individual studying a language will be prevented from learning of the relevant community’s characteristics. The strong relationship between language and culture has also reflected in the literature. There are a great number of studies on culture, especially in the second language education (Akpınar & Mete, 2013; C. Alyılmaz, 2010; Bada, 2000; Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002; Castro & Sercu, 2005; Cortazzi & Jin, 2000; Çakır, 2006; Frank, 2013; Genç & Bada, 2005; Peterson & Coltrane, 2003; Salazar & Carballo, 2011, Qu, 2010, Vrbová, 2006).

The words in a language help an individual understand the relevant culture. Mert, S. Alyılmaz, Bay & Akbaba (2009) argue that a culture can be depicted with reference to vocabulary of the language, excess, lack or absence of the words related to some concepts, and perception types of the concepts. Tomalin & Stempleski (1993) set out the cultural elements as follows:

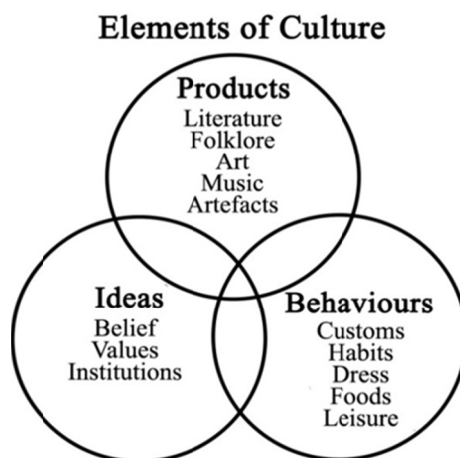


Figure 1. Elements of Culture (Tomalin and Stempleski, 1993, p. 7)

As seen in Figure 1, Tomalin & Stempleski (1993) evaluated the culture under three dimensions: product, thought and behavior. Sub-elements of the product dimension include literature, folklore, art, music and artefacts, while sub-elements of the thought dimension is introduced as beliefs, values and institutions. Finally, sub-elements of the behavior dimension consist of customs, habits, dress, foods and leisure.

Teacher is the person who can express cultural elements and make his/her students feel it. Therefore, the teacher has a duty to ensure the students to establish a relationship between their own culture and the target language's culture (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002, Castro & Sercu, 2005). However, the teacher must use various materials to fulfill this task. In this regard the teacher makes use of the relevant textbook, at first. Cortazzi & Jin (2000) identifies the textbook as one of the dimensions of the cultural awareness-building process in language teaching.

Many books related to Japanese and Japanese culture as well as Chinese and Chinese culture has been examined in the relevant literature (Wierzbicka, 2006). Wang (2006) stated that the increase in the number of textbooks written for Chinese teaching leads to confusion in minds. Therefore, the extra amount of textbooks written for a second language teaching places an extra responsibility on a language teacher. Because the teacher should be able to choose the textbook that will be most useful to his/her students. For this reason, the researches deeply examining the textbooks should guide the teachers. Examining the Genki I textbook in a cultural perspective in details, this study tries to provide the teachers with an idea about choosing a textbook.

This study aims to examine the textbook "Genki I: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese" in terms of cultural elements. The cultural elements in the textbook of Genki I: an Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese were evaluated within the scope of this present study. The cultural elements created by Tomalin & Stempleski (1993) were taken as basis in the evaluation of the cultural elements stated in the textbook in question.

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

How does product dimension of the culture take place in in the textbook "Genki I: an Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese"?

How does thought dimension of the culture take place in in the textbook "Genki I: an Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese"?

How does behavior dimension of the culture take place in in the textbook "Genki I: an Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese"?

What are the devices used to create cultural awareness in the textbook "Genki I: an Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese"?

2. Method

2.1 Research Model

This study was performed in screening model and designed according to the qualitative method in order to evaluate the cultural elements in the textbook of Genki I: an Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese. Qualitative research can be defined as a research following qualitative process in which the qualitative data collection methods such as observation, interview and document analysis are used, and the relevant phenomena and events are presented in a realistic and holistic manner in their natural environments (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008, p. 39).

2.2 The Examined Textbook

The textbook “Genki I: an Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese” (English parts and images) was examined in the present study. This textbook aims to teach Japanese as a second language at the beginner level. There are 12 chapters in the textbook, and cultural notes at the end of each chapter.

2.3 Data Collection

The research data were collected from the textbook of Genki I: an Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese, using the document review method as one of the qualitative data collection methods. “Document review includes analysis of the written materials that contain information about the facts or phenomena targeted for investigation” (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008, p. 187).

2.4 Data Analysis

Content analysis from the qualitative analysis techniques was used in evaluation of the research data. “The main goal in content analysis is to reach the concepts and associations that can explain the collected data. The basic process in content analysis is to put together similar data within the framework of specific concepts and themes, and interpret them in a way that the reader can understand” (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008, p 227). The textbook was read in the research and then the coding was done in a general framework. Later, the categories, themes and codes were created based on the cultural elements generated by Tomalin & Stempleski (1993) and the cultural awareness devices specified by Qu (2010), Frank (2013), Peterson & Coltrane (2003). Images in the textbook have also been analyzed in terms of culture. Yıldırım & Şimşek (2008) and Merriam (2013) stated that visual materials are among the document types, so they can be used in qualitative researches.

The codes and themes of the two researchers were compared in order to ensure reliability of the research and confirm whether the codes contained in the obtained themes have corresponded to the themes in question. Miles & Huberman's (1994) Reliability = (number of agreements / total number of agreements + disagreements) x100 formula was used to ensure the reliability of the data obtained by the content analysis method applied in the research. The reliability among the researchers was found to be .93 using this formula. The codes leading a disagreement between the two researchers were discussed and then placed under appropriate themes.

3. Results

The categories, themes and codes obtained from the textbook that was examined in the direction of the research questions are presented in this section by using the following tables.

Table 1. Themes and codes of the cultural elements in product dimension of the culture in genki I textbook

Genki I: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese	
Themes and Codes	Themes and Codes by the Textbook Section
Alphabet	Section including Alphabet Theme
Hiragana	Japanese Writing System
Kanji	Japanese Writing System
Katakana	Japanese Writing System
Architecture	Section including Architecture Theme
Japanese Houses	Culture Notes
Shurei Gate on 2,000-yen bill	Culture Notes
Folklore	Section including Folklore Theme
Japanese Folktale	The Folktale Kasajizo
Kabuki Theater	Kabuki and Culture Notes
Puppet Theater	Culture Notes
Humorous Storytelling	Culture Notes
Masked Musical Drama	Culture Notes
Literature	Section including Literature Theme
A portrait of Ichiyoo Higuchi on 5,000-yen bill	Culture Notes
Philosophy	Section including Philosophy Theme
A portrait of Yukichi Fukuzawa on 10,000-yen bill	Culture Notes
Science	Section including Science Theme
A portrait of Hideyo Noguchi on 10,000-yen bill	Culture Notes
Sport	Sections including Sports Theme
Sumo Wrestling	Culture Notes
Judo	Culture Notes
Japanese Fencing	Culture Notes

As seen in Table 1, the themes including alphabet, architecture, folklore, literature, philosophy, science and sports that are related to the product dimension were obtained in the textbook of Genki I: an Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese.

The codes including Hiragana, Kanji and Katakana were obtained under the alphabet theme. These codes are located in the “Japanese Writing System” section. Here is a sample part where the Hiragana and Katakana codes were obtained:

Hiragana and Katakana, like the alphabet, represent sounds. As you can see in the above example, hiragana has a roundish shape and is used for conjugation endings, function words, and native Japanese words not covered by kanji. Katakana, which has rather straight lines, is normally used for writing loanwords and foreign names... (Banno, Ikeda, Ohno, Shinagawa & Tokashiki, 2011, p. 24).

The codes including “Japanese Houses and Shurei Gate on 2,000-yen bill” were obtained under the folklore theme. These codes are located in the “Culture Notes” section. Here is a sample part where the “Japanese Houses” code was obtained:

Traditionally, Japanese buildings were made of wood. Rooms were floored with tatami (rice-straw mats) and divided by fusuma or shoji (two types of sliding doors). Modern Japanese houses have mainly Western-style rooms, and are equipped with Western-style toilets... (Banno et al., 2011, p. 101).

The codes including “Japanese Folktale”, “Kabuki Theater”, “Puppet Theater”, “Humorous Storytelling” and “Masked Musical Drama” were obtained under the architecture theme. The “Japanese Folktale” and “Kabuki Theater” codes are located in “The Folktale Kasajizo” and “The Kabuki and Culture Notes” sections, respectively. Moreover, the codes including “Puppet Theater”, “Humorous Storytelling” and “Masked Musical Drama” are located in the “Culture Notes” section. Here is a sample part where the “Kabuki” code was obtained:

Takeshi: Mary, do you like Kabuki?

Mary: Kabuki? I don't know it well. But Robert said it was interesting.

Takeshi: I got two tickets for Kabuki, so would you like to go to see it?

Mary: Sure. When is it?

Takeshi: On Thursday. From twelve noon to four.

... (Banno et al., p. 209).

The “A portrait of Ichiyoo Higuchi on 5,000-yen bill” code was obtained under the literature theme. This code is located in the “Culture Notes” section. Here is a sample part where the “A portrait of Ichiyoo Higuchi on 5,000-yen bill” code was obtained:

A portrait of Ichiyoo Higuchi (1872-1896), a writer and poet (Banno et al., p. 68). The “A portrait of Yukichi Fukuzawa on 10,000-yen bill” code was obtained under the philosophy theme. This code is located in the “Culture Notes” section. Here is a sample part where the “A portrait of Yukichi Fukuzawa on 10,000-yen bill” code was obtained:

A portrait of Yukichi Fukuzawa (1835-1901), a philosopher and the founder of Keio University (Banno et al., p. 68).

The “A portrait of Hideyo Noguchi on 10,000-yen bill” code was obtained under the science theme. This code is located in the “Culture Notes” section. Here is a sample part where the “A portrait of Hideyo Noguchi on 10,000-yen bill” code was obtained:

A portrait of Hideyo Noguchi (1876-1928), a bacteriologist who devoted himself to yellow fever research (Banno et al., p. 68).

The codes including “Sumo Wrestling”, “Judo” and “Japanese Fencing” were obtained under the sports theme. These codes are located in the “Culture Notes” section. Here is a sample part where the “Sumo Wrestling” code was obtained:

The parts of the body are explained through the Sumo wrestler visual. (Banno et al., p. 185).

Table 2. Themes and codes of the cultural elements in thought dimension of the culture in Genki I textbook

Genki I: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese	
Themes and Codes	Themes and Codes by the Textbook Section
Respect	Section including Respect Theme
Bowing	Culture Notes
Faith	Section including Faith Theme
Religious days	The Folktale Kasajizo
Visit to the Buddhist temple	Culture Notes

As seen in the table 2, the “bowing” code was obtained under the respect theme. This code is located in the “Culture Notes” section. Here is a sample part where the “bowing” code was obtained:

Japanese people greet each other by bowing, which has many other functions, such as expressing respect, gratitude, or apologies. Three different ways of bowing, ranging from a small nod of the head to a 45-degree bend at the waist... (Banno et al., p. 37).

The codes including “Religious days” and “Visit to the Buddhist temple” were obtained under the faith theme. These codes are located in “the Folktale Kasajizo” and “the Culture Notes” sections, respectively. Here is a sample part where the “Visit to the Buddhist temple” code was obtained:

Many people go to Shinto Shrines and Buddhist temples... (Banno et al., p. 264).

Table 3. Themes and codes of the cultural elements in behavior dimension of the culture in Genki I textbook

Genki I: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese	
Themes and Codes	Themes and Codes by the Textbook Section
Customs	Section including Customs Theme
Greeting in Japanese culture	Culture Notes
Naming in Japanese culture	Culture Notes
Tea ceremony	Culture Notes
Flower arrangement	Culture Notes
Calligraphy	Culture Notes
New year in Japan	Culture Notes
Education	Section including Education Theme
Japanese Education System	Culture Notes
Festivals	Section including Festivals Theme
The Sapporo Snow Festival	Culture Notes
The Kyoto Gion Festival	Culture Notes
The Aomori Nebuta Festival	Culture Notes
The Tokushima Awa Dance Festival	Culture Notes
The Sendai Tanabata Festival	Culture Notes
Foods and Drinks	Section including Foods and Drinks Theme
Beef rice bowl	Culture Notes
Black beans	Culture Notes
Buckwheat noodles	Culture Notes
Curry with rice	Culture Notes
Deep-fried shrimp	Culture Notes
Dumplings	Culture Notes
Hamburger steak	Culture Notes
Herring roe	Culture Notes
Natto	Grammar
Ramen noodles	Culture Notes
Raw seafood	Culture Notes
Rice cake	Culture Notes
Sake	Practice
Savory pancake	Culture Notes
Spaghetti	Culture Notes
Sushi	Practice
Tempura	Practice
Tonkatsu	Shopping
Udon noodles	Culture Notes
Leisure	Section including Leisure Theme
Kinship terms	Culture Notes
Climate in Japan	Culture Notes
National holidays in Japan	Culture Notes
Use of the Latin alphabet in everyday life	Japanese Writing System
Phone number	Expression Notes
Transportation	Culture Notes
Yen's value	Culture Notes
Time period	Practice
Tourism	Section including Tourism Theme
Text promoting Okinawa	A Trip to Okinawa
Text visualizing Okinawa	A Trip to Okinawa
Map of the Cultural Centers	Map of Japan

As seen in the table 3, the codes including “Greeting in Japanese culture”, “Naming in Japanese culture”, “Tea ceremony”, “Flower arrangement”, “Calligraphy” and “New year in Japan” were obtained under the customs theme. These codes in question are located in the “Culture Notes” section. Here is a sample part where the “Naming in Japanese culture” code was obtained: *When Japanese give their name, they say their family name first and given name last (middle names do not exist). When introducing themselves, they often say only their family name. Here are some typical Japanese names...* (Banno et al., p. 45).

The “Japanese Education System” code was obtained under the education theme. This code is located in the “Culture Notes” section. Here is a sample part where the “Japanese Education System” code was obtained:

Most children in Japan attend kindergartens or nursery schools before entering elementary school. Compulsory education comprises six years of elementary school and three years of junior high school. Although not compulsory, over 95% of junior high students go on to high school for three years... (Banno et al., p. 154).

The codes including “The Sapporo Snow Festival”, “The Kyoto Gion Festival”, “The Aomori Nebuta Festival”, “The Tokushima Awa Dance Festival” and “The Sendai Tanabata Festival” were obtained under the festivals theme. These codes in question are located in the “Culture Notes” section. Here is a sample part where the “Sapporo Snow Festival” code was obtained:

There are many festivals in Japan. Some are famous, while others are known only to the locals. Some are very traditional, while others are rather new. Here are some examples of well-known festivals...The Sapporo Snow Festival is held for a week in early February. It features large snow sculptures constructed in a park on the main avenue (Banno et al., p. 144).

The codes including “Beef rice bowl”, “Black beans”, “Buckwheat noodles”, “Curry with rice”, “Deep-fried shrimp”, “Dumplings”, “Hamburger steak”, “Herring roe”, “Natto”, “Ramen noodles”, “Raw seafood”, “Rice cake”, “Sake”, “Savory pancake”, “Spaghetti”, “Sushi”, “Tempura”, “Tonkatsu” and “Udon noodles” were obtained under the foods and drinks theme. The codes including “Beef rice bowl”, “Black beans”, “Buckwheat noodles”, “Curry with rice”, “Deep-fried shrimp”, “Dumplings”, “Hamburger steak”, “Herring roe”, “Ramen noodles”, “Raw seafood”, “Rice cake”, “Savory pancake”, “Spaghetti” and “Udon noodles” were located in the “Culture Notes” section. The codes including “Sake”, “Sushi” and “Tempura” were located in the “Practice” section. The “Map of the Cultural Centers” code is located in the “Map of Japan” section. The “Natto” code is located in the “Grammar” section. The “Tonkatsu” code is located in the Shopping section. Here is a sample part where the “Rice cake” code was obtained:

...The staple food for New Year's is rice cake, which is toasted or served in New Year's soup... (Banno et al., p. 264).

The codes including “Kinship terms”, “Climate in Japan”, “National holidays in Japan”, “Use of the Latin alphabet in everyday life”, “Phone number”, “Transportation”, “Yen's value” and “Time period” were obtained under the leisure theme. The codes including “Kinship terms”, “Climate in Japan” and “National holidays in Japan” were located in the “Culture Notes” section. The “Use of the Latin alphabet in everyday life” code is located in the “Japanese Writing System” section. The “Phone number” code is located in the Expression Notes section. The “Time period” code is located in the “Practice” section. The “Time period” code is located in the “Practice” section. Here is a sample part where the “Climate in Japan” code was obtained:

...Winter is sunny and dry on the Pacific coasts, but cloudy and snowy on the Sea of Japan coast. Spring is rather short because daily temperatures rise quickly and the season is cut short by the arrival of the rainy season, which lasts for about a month and a half... (Banno et al., p. 286).

The codes including “Text promoting Okinawa”, “Text visualizing Okinawa” and “Map of the Cultural Centers” were obtained under the tourism theme. The codes including “Text promoting Okinawa” and “Text visualizing Okinawa” were located in the “A Trip to Okinawa” section. The “Map of the Cultural Centers” code is located in the “Map of Japan” section. Here is a sample part where the “Text promoting Okinawa” code was obtained:

...

Takeshi: Robert, thank you for the postcard. Did you enjoy the trip?

Robert: Yes. The sea was very beautiful in Okinawa.

Takeshi: Good. I like the sea very much, too. Was the airline ticket expensive?

Robert: No, it wasn't so expensive. How was your date, Takeshi?

Takeshi:.. (Banno et al., p. 129).

Table 4. Devices used for the cultural awareness in product dimension of the culture in Genki I textbook

Genki I: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese	
Cultural Elements	Devices for Cultural Awareness
Alphabet	Experiencing culture through language use Picture
Architecture	Describing and explaining the culture Picture
Folklore	Dialogue Picture Reading text True/False
Literature	Picture
Philosophy	Picture
Science	Picture
Sport	Picture

As seen in the table 4, the devices used for the creation of cultural awareness in the alphabetical element were detected as the “Experiencing culture through language use” and “Picture”. Here is a sample part where the “Experiencing culture through language use” device was used:

...*Knji*, or Chinese characters, represent not just sounds but also meanings. Mostly, *kanji* are used for nouns and stems of verbs and adjectives (Banno et al., p. 24).

The devices used for the creation of cultural awareness in the architectural element were detected as “Picture” and “Describing and explaining the culture”. Here is a sample visual:



Image 1. The visual used in the dialogue text of “Mary’s host family’s house” (Banno et al., p. 102).

The devices used for the creation of cultural awareness in the folklore element were detected as “Dialogue”, “Picture”, “Reading text” and “True/False”. Here is a sample visual:



Image 2. The visuals used in the section of “Japanese Traditional” (Banno et al., p. 226).

The “Picture” device was used for the creation of cultural awareness in the Literature, Philosophy, Science and Sports elements. The visual used in the Sport element is presented as follows:



Image 3. The visuals used in the section of “Japanese Traditional” (Banno et al., p. 226).

Table 5. Devices used for the cultural awareness in thought dimension of the culture in Genki I textbook

Genki I: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese	
Cultural Elements	Devices for Cultural Awareness
Respect	Describing and explaining the culture Picture
Faith	Describing and explaining the culture Free writing Picture

As seen in the table 5, the devices used for the creation of cultural awareness in the respect element were detected as “Describing and explaining the culture” and “Picture”. Here is a sample part where the “Describing and explaining the culture” device was used:

Culture Note: ...When meeting someone in a business situation for the first time, it is customary to exchange meeshi (business cards) with a small bow. Etiquette guides list a vast number of rules and pointers, but just remember that the important thing is to clearly show your respect when exchanging meeshi (Banno et al., p. 37).

The devices used for the creation of cultural awareness in the faith element were detected as “Describing and explaining the culture”, “Free writing” and “Picture”. Here is a sample part where the “Free writing” device was used:

Ⅲ 書く練習 (かきなしゅ)

Choose one topic from the list below and write what you do/did on these days.

お正月 クリスマス (Christmas) ハロウィーン (Halloween)
 誕生日 (Birthday) バレンタインデー (St. Valentine's Day)
 ラマダン (Ramadan) ハヌカー (Chanukkah)
 ディーワリー (Diwali) Others

Figure 2. “Free writing” device used in the section of “The Folktale Kasajizo” (Banno et al., p. 339).

Table 6. Devices used for the cultural awareness in behavior dimension of the culture in Genki I textbook

Genki I: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese	
Cultural Elements	Devices for Cultural Awareness
Customs	Describing and explaining the culture Picture
Education	Describing and explaining the culture Picture
Festivals	Describing and explaining the culture Picture
Foods and Drinks	Describing and explaining the culture Experiencing culture through language use Picture Role play
Leisure	Describing and explaining the culture, Picture Experiencing culture through language use Footnote Picture
Tourism	Dialogue Picture

As seen in the table 6, the devices used for the creation of cultural awareness in the customs element were detected as “Describing and explaining the culture” and “Picture”. Here is a sample part where the “Picture” device was used:



Image 4. The visuals used in the section of “Japanese Traditional” (Banno et al., p. 226).

The devices used for the creation of cultural awareness in the education element were detected as “Describing and explaining the culture” and “Picture”. Here is a sample part where the “Picture” device was used:

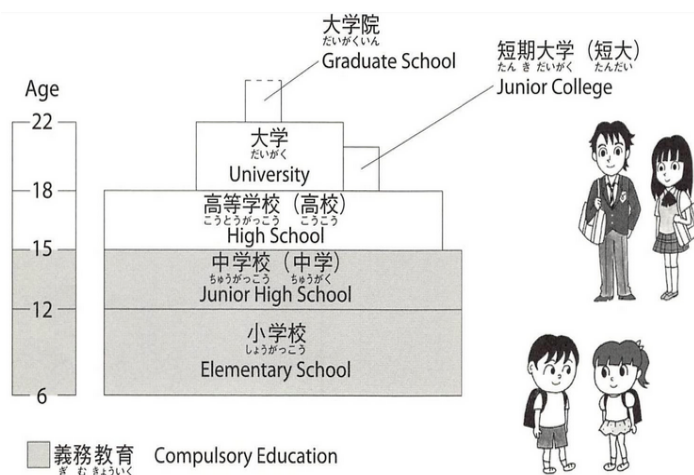


Image 5. The visuals used in the section of “Japan’s educational system” (Banno et al., p. 154).

The devices used for the creation of cultural awareness in the festivals element were detected as “Describing and explaining the culture” and “Picture”. Here is a sample part where the “Describing and explaining the culture” device was used:

The Aomori Nebuta Festival is held August 2-7. Huge colorful lanterns are pulled through the streets, accompanied by people dancing and playing flutes and drums (Banno et al., p. 144).

The devices used for the creation of cultural awareness in the foods and drinks element were detected as “Describing and explaining the culture”, “Experiencing culture through language use”, “Picture” and “Role play”. Here is a sample part where the “Role play” device was used:

Role Play—One student is a waiter/waitress. The other student goes to a restaurant. Look at the menu below and order some food or drink, using Dialogue II as a model (See Culture Note in Lesson 8 [p. 207] for more information on Japanese food.) (Banno et al., p. 79).

The devices used for the creation of cultural awareness in the leisure element were detected as “Describing and explaining the culture”, “Experiencing culture through language use”, “Footnote” and “Picture”. Here is a sample part where the “Describing and explaining the culture” device was used:

...Summer in most parts of Japan is hot and very humid, and almost tropical in some places. Typhoons make occasional landfalls in summer and early fall (Banno et al., p. 286).

The devices used for the creation of cultural awareness in the tourism element were detected as “Dialogue” and “Picture”. Here is a sample part where the “Picture” device was used:

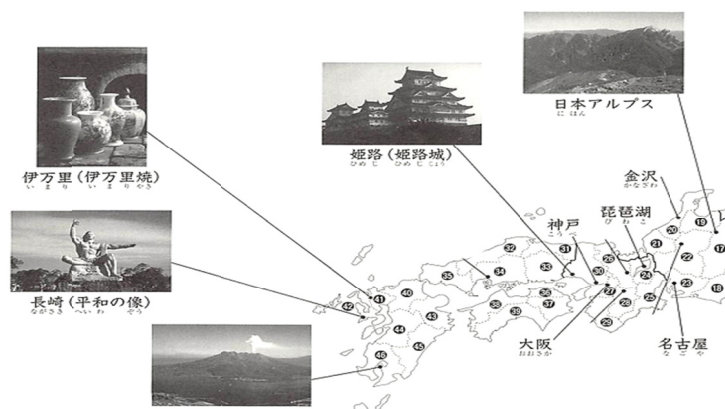


Image 6. Part of the Japanese culture centers map (Banno et al., p. 378)

4. Conclusion and Discussion

Genki is one of the popular books to learn Japanese. This study has examined the textbook “Genki I: An Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese” in terms of cultural elements. There are examples of the product, thought and behavior dimensions of the culture in this textbook, and also it consists of a various devices to create cultural awareness. Qu (2010), Peterson & Coltrane (2003) and Frank (2013) defined the devices to create cultural awareness as follows: cultural collections, web quests, role plays, cultural observations, culture journals, describing and explaining the culture, experiencing culture through language use, dialogue and mini-dramas, authentic materials, proverbs, picture, films, music, songs and dances.

Cultural notes have been added to section ends in the textbook “Genki I: an Integrated Course in Elementary Japanese”. Thus, those who want to learn Japanese have the opportunity to gain knowledge about Japanese culture through these cultural notes. However, the Japanese culture was not only included in the cultural notes of the textbook, and the cultural texts on Japanese culture were included in various parts of the textbook as well. From time to time, the textbook also mentions about the cultures other than the Japanese culture. As a result of the examination of the textbook, it has been seen that cultural objects are not conveyed as an imposition on those who want to learn Japanese. Because the textbook does not give detailed information on cultural elements, and different attitudes of different cultures are not displayed. Those who want to learn Japanese through this book can raise their awareness on different dimensions of the culture. The raising awareness of an individual in terms of cultural values or social characteristics of a society does not mean that he/she unquestionably embraces these values and characteristics. On the contrary, these items enable his/her personality to get out of the narrow-frame and gain a more universal structure (Bada, 2000).

The elements including alphabet, architecture, folklore, literature, philosophy, science and sports were determined for the cultural product dimension in the textbook Genki I. These elements are usually found in the “Culture Notes” section as well as rarely in different parts of the textbook (Japanese Writing System, The Folktale Kasajizo, and Kabuki). The “Picture” device is often used to provide cultural awareness for the cultural elements in the product dimension. In addition, the devices including “Experiencing culture through language use”, “Describing and explaining culture”, “Dialogue”, “Reading text” and “True / False” were also used in the textbook. Doğanay (2013) investigated the influence of various cultural activities on language learning, used the applications including games, role-play, dialogue, discussion, target culture and comparison of their own cultures. He used videos and cultural materials in his work, and concluded that cultural practices contribute to language learning in various ways.

The elements of respect and faith regarding the thought dimension of the culture were also determined in the textbook Genki I. These elements are usually found in the “Culture Notes” section, but the faith element is located in the “Folktale Kasajizo” section. The devices including “Describing and explaining the culture”, “Picture” and “Free writing” were used to raise cultural awareness in the product dimension of the culture. The activity that the “Free writing” device was used also included cultural elements of different beliefs. So the textbook has the opportunity to appeal to students in different cultures who want to learn Japanese. The textbook proposes to increase the number of such samples for all dimension of the culture. So those who want to learn foreign languages will also learn to respect different cultures. Second language teaching will be wrong and incomplete without the culture. If students do not have any idea on the language or country they are targeted to learn will cause them to become impersonal, insensitive in their second language learning (Genç & Bada, 2005).

The textbook Genki I has emphasized behavior dimension of the culture, at most. The elements including customs, education, festivals, foods and drink, leisure, tourism were found in the behavior dimension. These elements are usually

detected in the “Culture Notes” section as well as rarely in different parts of the book (Grammar, Practice, Shopping, Japanese Writing System, Expression Notes, A Trip to Okinawa, Map of Japan). The cultural elements in the “Grammar” section of the textbook is remarkable. Er (2015) found that Turkish language teachers do not make much use of cultural elements in the language teaching process, and also stated that associating the examples given in language lecture courses with culture could save teaching of linguistic knowledge from boredom and bring it to a more meaningful state. Kutlu (2015) asserted that language teaching cannot be limited with teaching linguistic rules and basic skills.

The devices including “Describing and explaining the culture” and “Picture” were mostly used to raise cultural awareness in the behavior dimension of the culture. Moreover, the devices including “Experiencing culture through language use”, “Describing and explaining the culture”, “role play”, “footnote”, and “Dialogue” were also found in this dimension. The support of cultural elements with various devices will undoubtedly raise the level of cultural awareness of the student. Saniei (2012) asserts that the development of the student's cultural awareness can make easier for him/her to use language in real life.

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